GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1015
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Impact of Radiation on Health
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

a) whether the Government has conducted any study to review the impact of mobile phones and towers radiation on health;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government had undertook any such study previously also and if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether despite banning installation of mobile towers at the residential areas, schools, hospitals and playgrounds etc., the cases of violations are still happening; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government against the violators particularly in Maharashtra?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) & (b) Yes, Madam. The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) under Department of Science and Technology (Government of India) has constituted an Expert Committee/Task Force to evaluate Research & Development (R&D) proposals to study the possible impact of Electromagnetic Field (EMF) Radiation exposure from mobile tower and handset on life (humans, living organism, flora & fauna and environment) and related initiatives. The Committee has short listed research proposals for further consideration, which are being supported for funding jointly by Department of Science and Technology and Department of Telecommunications (DoT). Nineteen research proposals, including those from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras, IIT Kharagpur, All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) New Delhi, AIIMS Rishikesh, Thiagarajar College of Engineering Madurai, Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) Chandigarh, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) Bangalore, Amity University Noida, Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana University Bangalore, Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar etc., have been initiated in 2015.

(c) An Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) to examine the effect of Electro Magnetic Field (EMF) Radiation from base stations and mobile phones was constituted on 24.08.2010. In its report, the committee has, inter-alia, referred to studies conducted by certain institutes in India. Further, the IMC in its report, after examining various national and international studies on the environmental and health related concerns due to EMF, has indicated that most of the laboratory studies were unable to find a direct link between exposure to radio frequency radiation and health; and the scientific studies as yet have not been able to confirm a cause and effect relationship between radio frequency radiation and health.

Also, a committee comprising of members from Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) Kharagpur, Kanpur, Delhi, Roorkee, Bombay and from other scientific institutions of the country including Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) Delhi was setup at the behest of Hon'ble High Court Allahabad, Lucknow bench. This Committee has observed that World Health Organization (WHO) has referred to approximately 25,000 studies, conducted around the world over past 30 years, and based on an in-depth review of scientific literature, has concluded: "current evidence does not confirm the existence of any health consequences from exposure to low level electromagnetic fields". Since the effects on human beings are to be studied over a long period of time, further studies are going on around the world.

(d) & (e) The main conclusion from the WHO reviews is that EMF exposures below the limits recommended in the International Commission on Non Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) international guidelines do not appear to have any known consequence on health. In India norms for exposure limit for the Radio Frequency Field (Base Station Emissions) are already 10 times more stringent than the safe limits prescribed by ICNIRP and recommended by WHO. Making the norms ten times stricter than what has been prescribed by ICNIRP and recommended by WHO, obviates the need for having separate norms for special localities like schools, hospitals and residential areas. Further, Government of India has taken adequate steps to ensure that Telecommunications Service Providers strictly adhere to these prescribed norms.

Accordingly, the advisory guidelines issued by DoT to state governments on 01.08.2013 for issue of clearance for installation of mobile towers do not place any restriction on installation of mobile towers in public buildings/places such as residential areas, schools, hospitals, playground etc. As such the violation of the banning installation of towers at residential areas, schools, hospitals, & playgrounds etc., does not arise. Further, several High Courts viz Hon'ble High Courts of Punjab & Haryana, Madras, Kerala, Gujarat, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Allahabad in the court cases related to issue of effects of the radiation from cell phone towers have given judgements whereby they have dismissed petitions, where the mobile tower installations at various locations were challenged on grounds of health effects of EMF radiations.

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